

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 2329

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: MARCH 11 COUP ATTEMPT REPORT

SUMMARY: PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF RADIO EXCERPTS FROM REPORT ON MARCH 11 COUP ATTEMPT INDICATE IT IS Milder THAN EXPECTED. MOST OF THE FIRE IS DIRECTED AT PPD AND THE PRESS FOR HAVING CREATED THE ATMOSPHERE FOR A COUP ATTEMPT. NO DIRECT LINK WITH THE PPD OR PS IS ALLEGED. FEARS THAT PS AND PPD MIGHT BE FORCED OUT OF ELECTION OR ELECTIONS CANCELLED AS RESULT OF THE REPORT APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN LAID TO REST. REPORT OBLIQUELY LINKS USG TO ABORTIVE COUP. END SUMMARY.

1. RADIO CLUBE PORTUGUES AND THE PORTUGUESE NATIONAL RADIO NETWORK HAVE CARRIED EXCERPTS FROM THE PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION INTO THE MARCH 11 ABORTIVE COUP, WHICH WILL ALSO BEGIN TO APPEAR IN PRINT IN
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APRIL 22 AFTERNOON PRESS. HIGHLIGHTS FOLLOW.

2. INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE COUP ATTEMPT:

THE INQUIRY IN GENERAL BLAMES MARCH 11 ON "FORCES OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CAPITALISM, HIGH FINANCE AND ITS ALLIES" WHO CONJURED UP A GIGANTIC CAMPAIGN TO SQUELCH THE YOUNG PORTUGUESE DEMOCRACY.

3. BACKGROUND OF THE COUP ATTEMPT:

ORIGINS GO BACK TO SPINOLA RESIGNATION SPEECH, WHICH HELPED DESTABILIZE POLITICAL-SOCIAL SITUATION, AND WHICH ACCOMPANIED BY A GIGANTIC CAMPAIGN TO ISOLATE THE AFM AND LINK IT EXCLUSIVELY TO THE COMMUNIST PARTY. OTHER PARTS OF THE PREPARATION INCLUDED SYSTEMATIC VIOLENCE AGAINST THE RIGHT WING PARTIES IN ORDER TO CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE PROPITIOUS FOR VIOLENCE; FOREIGN BADMOUTHING OF THE NEW PORTUGAL; ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL SABOTAGE, TALK OF POSSIBILITY OF CIVIL WAR BY RESPONSIBLE POLITICIANS (READ MARIO SOARES); AND BUILD UP OF GENERAL SPINOLA AS A SAVIOR FROM CHAOS.

4. SPECIFIC PREPARATIONS FOR THE COUP ATTEMPT:

MASSAMA--HOME OF GENERAL SPINOLA--WAS THE BASE OF THE CONSPIRACY. SPINOLA SURROUNDED HIMSELF THERE WITH MEN OF CONFIDENCE, SOME OF WHOM MAINTAINED CLOSE TIES WITH FOREIGN EMBASSIES, CERTAIN POLITICAL PARTIES, AND MEN OF WEALTH. SPINOLA GAVE AN INTERVIEW IN ESPRESSO IN JANUARY TO PROPOUND HIS ANTI-DEMOCRATIC LINE. PSYCHOLOGICAL SPADEWORK WAS CARRIED OUT IN CERTAIN MILITARY UNITS AGAINST THE UNITARY LABOR CONFEDERATION, AFM INSTITUTIONALIZATION, AND THE GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO ACT. SPINOLA AND HIS FORCES, LEARNING OF THE AFM PLAN TO INSTITUTIONALIZE ITSELF AND APPROVE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES SPEEDED UP THEIR COUP PLANS. THEY CONCOCTED A FALSE PLOT BY LUAR TO KILL 1500 IMPORTANT PEOPLE. THIS WORD WAS CONVEYED FROM THE SPANISH DGS AND THE FRENCH SECRET SERVICE. INCLUDED WERE PLANS FOR THE ELIMINATION OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE PRESIDET, SOARES, SALGADO ZENHA, SARAIVA DE CARVALHO, AND ALL THE COMMUNISTS. SPINOLA HIMSELF WOULD ALSO BE ELIMINATED LATER ON WHEN HE WAS NO LONGER NEEDED.

5. CONCLUSIONS OF REPORT.

FAILURE OF THE PLOT WAS DUE TO BAD JUDGMENT; LACK OF POPULAR SUPPORT; UNDERESTIMATION OF RAL-1 MILITARY CAPACITY; AFM MILITARY AND POLITICAL ABILITY; AND ABILITY OF MASSES TO MOBILIZE.
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6. RESULTS OF COUP ATTEMPT:

--CLARIFICATION OF POLITICAL SITUATION
--INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF AFM
--CREATION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL
--NATIONALIZATION
--PLATFORM OF UNDERSTANDING
--PURGING AND DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE ARMED FORCES

7. ANNEXES:

ANNEXES TO THE REPORT INCLUDE AMONG OTHER THINGS:

--SPINOLA'S EXPRESSO INTERVIEW OF JAN. 4 AND THE EXPRESSO ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING WEEK.

--EXPRESSO'S ARTICLE ON BRANCH ELECTIONS IN THE ARMY.

--ANALYSIS OF THE PRESS ON THE EVE OF THE ELECTIONS.

8. COMMENT: THE WORST FEARS OF THE MODERATE PARTIES WERE NOT REALIZED IN THE REPORT, WHICH AT LEAST IN THE RADIO VERSION APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN RATHER MILD. NO DIRECT LINKS BETWEEN THE COUP PLOTTERS AND THE PS AND PPD ARE ALLEGED, ALTHOUGH SPEECHES BY SOARES AND ARTICLES IN EXPRESSO ARE CITED AS CREATING THE CONDITION FOR A COUP ATTEMPT.

9. REACTION TO THE REPORT HAS YET TO DEVELOP, BUT IT SEEMS THAT IT WILL NOT PROVIDE A VEHICLE FOR PUSHING THE PPD AND PS OUT OF THE ELECTIONS OR CANCELLING THE ELECTIONS. HOWEVER, IT MAY HAVE SOME UTILITY FOR SMEARING THE PPD AND TO A LESSER DEGREE THE PS IN THE LAST HOURS OF THE CAMPAIGN.

10. REPORT REPRINTS AS ANNEX MARCH 3 ARTICLE FROM "TEMOIGNAGE CHRETIEN" STATING THAT AMBASSADOR CARLUCCI GAVE SPINOLA "GREEN LIGHT" TO REVERSE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS. (ARTICLE ALSO STATED AMBASSADOR HAD BEEN IN CHILE BEFORE COMING TO LISBON AND IS MEMBER CIA.) TEXT OF REPORT CITES THIS ANNEX AS EVIDENCE THAT SPINOLISTA CONSPIRACY WAS BEGINNING TO BECOME KNOWN BY NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION. CARLUCCI

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